

REMARKS

All of the previous claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). The current claims at issue are: Claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-21, 33-34, 37-44 and 46-47. Referring to the previous claims, claims 1, 21 and 42 have been amended; and the other claims remain unchanged. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

Response to Rejection of Claims

Applicants greatly appreciate the Examiner's recommendation on Page 21 of the open office action concerning providing further definitions for the term "set of time slots" and "channel".

As will be appreciated by reference to the above amendments to the claims, Applicants have adopted the examiners recommendations concerning further definition and in light of those changes and the explanations set forth below, Applicants believe that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

In the amended independent claims it has been clarified that the action of "allocating a set of time slots..." is applied on (different) time slots within one and the same frame "... in said recurrent frame". This distinguishes from the interpretation recited in the Office Action that the single (same) time slot of Clanton sent at several different occasions can be regarded as a set of time slots.

The amendments to claims 1, 21 and 42 have been made to emphasize the technical difference between the method disclosed in Bohm and the present inventive method, which difference results in that a combination of Bohm and Clanton does not disclose the subject-matter of the claimed method and that it would not have been obvious, before the time of filing this application, for a person of ordinary skill in the art to develop the teachings of Bohm and to obtain the present method.

In Bohm the communication resource is shared by several nodes, i.e., the nodes are connected to one and the same bus and are able to use the resource in common. This means that the time slots of a frame are distributed among several different nodes, each node owns a different part of the time slots of the frame. The node may allocate anything from all time

slots to no time slot to channels. It is assumed that initially each node have some time slots which are free, i.e. not allocated to any channel. When a node receives a request for time slots but does not have many enough free time slots, the node, in turn, sends a request for additional time slots to the downstream node. If the downstream node has free slots they are transferred to the requesting node, that is the ownership of those time slots is transferred. If no slots, owned by any node, are free the request is rejected.

In accordance with the present invention, the facility, for reasons of simplicity let us assume that it is a node, processing the allocation of time slots is in control of the processing, that is the method is directed to controlling the allocation of all slots owned by the node. This means that when a request for time slots is received, all owned time slots can be considered. Also a situation where there is no possibility to request time slots from some other node for the current transmission, since the medium is not shared in that sense, can be taken care of.

Consequently, the action of "controlling the allocation of time slots in said recurrent frame to said circuit-switched channels" is not disclosed in Bohm, nor is it disclosed in Clanton.

Furthermore, Bohm does not disclose any kind of priority handling. The mere distribution of time slots between nodes can not be -regarded as associating the slots with a priority, since there is no mentioning about any such consideration in Bohm. To the contrary, reallocation of time slots is only based on a consideration about whether they are currently being used or not. The usage as such has no connection with priority if there is no kind of priority flag or comparison of priorities.

Consequently, the action of "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority" is not disclosed in Bohm. It is neither disclosed in as discussed in previous communications and as evident from the Office Action.

In Clanton priority is used for labelling users needing access to a time slot which is to be sent over an uplink. A first user uses the time slot. If a second user, which is associated with a higher priority tries to get access to the time slot it is granted access. However, the first user keeps the ownership, and the comparison of priorities is repeated before every sending of the time slot. It is not obvious to a skilled person to apply this priority handling on the slot allocation mechanism of Bohm, where sets of slots are handled and requested, and

the ownership of time slots is transferred between nodes, and where only free slots are reallocatable, and the disclosure does not refer to this as a problem at all.

Consequently, there is a high step to get to the presently claimed invention, where a request is handled locally such that when there are no free time slots, the priority level associated with the request is compared with the priority level(s) of the slots already allocated to the other channels.

Additionally, should it have been obvious to combine the teachings of Bohm and Clanton and develop the result to the method as claimed herein, that should be reasonable already have been done for the SDH systems which have been developed and used over the recent years. In other words, the non-existence in the present SDH systems, where similar problems of allocation have been alerted, indicated the presence of non-obviousness.

Furthermore, since claims 2-8, 10-18, 20, 33, 34, and 37-41 are dependent on claim 1 they are patentable as well for at least the reason of dependency. Similarly, claims 43-44, 46 and 47 are dependent on claim 42; and, thus, are allowable for at least the reason of dependency.

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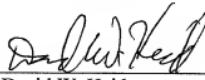
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CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn and the claims allowed. Should any other action be contemplated by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that he contact the undersigned at (408) 392-9250 to discuss the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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